

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MAAR, PO, US

SUBJ: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE AZORES NEGOTIATIONS

1. WE NOTE FROM RECENT EXCHANGES BETWEEN US AND GOP NEGOTIATORS THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON AT LEAST ONE POINT: THAT ANY ECONOMIC AID PACKAGE SHOULD BE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY FROM THE AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS. WE CONTINUE TO CONSIDER THIS TO BE A SOUND POSITION, PARTICULARLY SINCE IN ANY FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WE CAN MAINTAIN THAT THE ECONOMIC AID PACKAGE WAS IN RESPONSE TO PORTUGAL'S 1974 ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THE NEED AT THAT TIME TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FROM THE US TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN PORTUGAL. HOWEVER, WHILE WE DOUBT THAT THE PORTUGUESE WOULD PULL A FAST ONE, WE WOULD HOPE THAT ANY FORMAL UNDERTAKING BY THE US ON THE ECONOMIC AID SIDE WOULD COME AFTER RPT AFTER THE GOP HAS GIVEN A REASONABLY FIRM COMMITMENT FOR A RENEWAL OF THE BASE AGREEMENT ON TERMS ACCEPTABLE TO THE US. WE DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD TRY TO PICK UP THE AID PACKAGE AND LEAVE BEFORE SIGNING THE BASE EXTENSION. HOWEVER, SINCE APRIL 25 PORTUGUESE TEND TO BE LESS COURTLY AND THUS LESS HONOR-BOUND THAN PREVIOUSLY. THE US COULD OF COURSE DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ALREADY AGREED-UPON ECONOMIC AID PACKAGE UNTIL THE GOP SIGNED A LAJES EXTENSION. HOWEVER, THIS COULD LEAD TO MUTUAL RECRIMINATIONS AND CHARGES OF BAD FAITH WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THOSE IN THE PORTUGUESE REGIME WHO ARE SAID TO BE HOSTILE TO THE CONCLUSION OF A LAJES ACCORD, AND AT A MINIMUM COULD DELAY

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THE NEGOTIATIONS LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE THE LAJES AGREEMENT

INTO A PORTUGUESE ELECTION ISSUE. WE WOULD THUS RECOMMEND THAT THE SEPARATION BE ON PAPER ONLY, AS IN 1971, AND THAT THE FUNCTIONAL/CHRONOLOGICAL LINKAGE BE EXPLAINED TO THE PORTUGUESE AS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR BOTH AGREEMENTS.

2. WE GATHER THAT THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE SHOPPING LIST DOES NOT HAVE ON IT ANY REQUEST FOR MODERN MARINE PATROL AIRCRAFT. WE OF COURSE WOULD NOT WANT TO MAKE ANY SUGGESTION THAT WOULD LENGTHEN THEIR SHOPPING LIST. HOWEVER, THE MOST DIRECT MECHANISM THAT HAS COME TO OUR MINDS FOR MAINTAINING A LINK BETWEEN THE AZORES AGREEMENT AND NATO WOULD BE FOR THE PORTUGUESE TO ACQUIRE THROUGH THE AGREEMENT P-3 AIRCRAFT WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE ASW ACTIVITIES OF THE BASE. SINCE P-3 AIRCRAFT WOULD NOT BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO THE GOP IN ANY ROLE OTHER THAN THE NATO-RELATED ASW ROLE, PROVISION OF THESE AIRCRAFT WOULD HELP TO STRENGTHEN PORTUGAL'S NATO TIES AT A TIME WHEN THOSE TIES ARE COMING UNDER SOME QUESTION. CONCEIVABLY, IT COULD BE POINTED OUT TO THE GOP THAT THEIR PLANS FOR ACQUIRING MODERN MARINE PATROL AIRCRAFT WERE INCLUDED IN THEIR RESPONSE TO THE LATEST DPQ, AND THAT IN VIEW THEREOF, THEY MIGHT WISH TO RECONSIDER THEIR REQUEST FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT.

3. FINALLY, WHEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT BY AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY TO LISBON IN CONNECTION WITH A VISIT BY HIM TO MADRID WAS LAST DISCUSSED, IT WAS CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE WERE THEN INCLINED TO DELAY THE LAJES NEGOTIATIONS. NOW, HOWEVER, WE FEEL THERE IS A NEED TO EMPHASIZE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US IS ANXIOUS TO CONCLUDE A MUTUALLY-ADVANTAGEOUS AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SUCH AN IMPRESSION WOULD BE ENHANCED IF AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY WERE TO VISIT LISBON AND WOULD GIVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY FOR DIRECT INTERCHANGE WITH THOSE WHO ARE FORMULATING THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GOP NEGOTIATOR.

SCOTT

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